

Adults with Diabetes: Vaccinations are an Important Part of Protecting Your Health



Having a chronic health condition doesn't mean you have to lose control over your health. Every day you take steps, like eating right, monitoring your blood sugar, and watching your weight, to manage your diabetes and ensure the healthiest possible future. What if there was something you could do just once a year that could also help protect your health? There is—you can make sure you are up-to-date on vaccines to protect against a number of common diseases, some of which may be even more serious because of your diabetes.

A recent national survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed that most U.S. adults are not even aware that they need vaccines throughout their lives to protect against diseases like pertussis, hepatitis, shingles, and pneumococcal disease. Some vaccines you received as a child may require a booster, and as you get older, there may be other diseases you are at increased risk for based on your job, where you travel, and other factors.

Each year, thousands of adults needlessly suffer, are hospitalized, and even die from diseases that could be prevented by vaccines. Diabetes, even if well managed, can make it harder for your immune system to fight infections, so you may be at risk for more serious complications from an illness compared to people without diabetes. That's why you should **talk to your doctor or other healthcare professional to make sure you have all the vaccines you need.**

Some illnesses, like influenza, can raise your blood glucose to dangerously high levels so it's critical to get the flu vaccine every year. People with diabetes are also at an increased risk of death from pneumonia and other infections. Certain types of pneumonia and associated infections can be prevented by pneumococcal vaccines.

People with diabetes have higher rates of hepatitis B than the rest of the population. Outbreaks of hepatitis B associated with blood glucose monitoring procedures have occurred among people with diabetes. That's why the hepatitis B vaccine is important for you.

The good news is that getting vaccinated is easier than you think. Adults can get vaccines at doctors' offices, pharmacies, workplaces, health clinics, and health departments. Visit vaccine.healthmap.org to find a vaccine provider near you. Most health insurance plans cover the cost of recommended vaccines—a call to your insurance provider can give you the details.

What vaccines do you need?

Whether you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes, it is recommended that you get:

- Influenza vaccine each year to protect against seasonal flu
- Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine to protect against pneumonia and other pneumococcal diseases
- Hepatitis B vaccine series to protect against hepatitis B

In addition, all adults need:

- Tdap vaccine to protect against whooping cough and tetanus
- Zoster vaccine to protect against shingles if you are 60 years and older

You may also need other vaccines based on your age, health conditions, occupation, and other factors. The CDC offers a short quiz at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adultquiz to help determine which vaccines are recommended for you. For more information about adult vaccines, visit www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults.